

REMARKS

The present application includes 1-6 and 8-13. New claims 12 and 13 have been added by this Response. Claims 1-6 and 8-11 have been rejected by the Examiner.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-6 and 8-11 have been rejected 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,656,041 (“Kaminkow”) in view of U.S. Application Publication No. 2004/0209672 (“Okada”). The applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for at least the reasons described below.

Claim 1 of the present application defines a gaming machine having a chamber-defining portion that defines a chamber. A panel carrying gaming-machine artwork is arranged on one side of the chamber and a light-diffusing element is arranged on an opposed side of the chamber in spaced relationship relative to the panel. A gaming machine illuminating arrangement is arranged in the chamber between the panel and the light-diffusing element, wherein the gaming machine illuminating arrangement is operable to provide backlighting for the panel. The illuminating arrangement comprises a carrier and a plurality of semiconductor illuminating elements arranged in a predetermined array on the carrier.

Kaminkow describes a method and apparatus for emulating a storm associated with a gaming device. The apparatus of Kaminkow includes a topper unit connected to the housing of the gaming device. The topper unit includes an illumination source that emulates lightning associated with a storm (see, e.g., abstract).

As seen, for example, in Fig 3 of Kaminkow, the topper unit includes an opaque or translucent plastic face plate 70 that may display the name of a primary or secondary game. The face plate 70 acts to diffuse light (column 4 lines 18-23). Thus, in Kaminkow, a single integer (i.e. face plate 70) serves at least two functions, that of bearing artwork and also that of diffusing light.

There is no teaching or suggestion in Kaminkow of a light-diffusing element arranged on an opposed side of the chamber in spaced relationship relative to a panel carrying gaming machine artwork.

The office action concedes that Kaminkow does not specifically disclose that the light diffusing element can be arranged on an opposed side of the chamber relative to the panel.

It is respectfully submitted that Okada does not remedy the deficiencies of Kaminkow as prior art for claim 1.

Okada describes a gaming machine that includes two display means. These are referred to as a “variable display means” and a “front display means.” In the arrangement described in Figs. 35-37, the “variable display means” comprises mechanical reels 3L, 3C, 3R housed within the cabinet and displaying a plurality of symbols.

The “front display means” is a multi-layer panel body 5 that, in use, is positioned in front of the rotating reels 3L, 3C, 3R. Figs. 35 and 37 show two arrangements in which the front display means may be moved relative to the variable display means.

The multi-layer panel body 5 is illustrated in Fig. 36 and described, for example, at paragraph [0086]. The structure includes a liquid crystal panel 501 substantially making up the front display means. The adjacent layer of the multi-layer structure is a

light guide plate 503 made of an acrylic material having a predetermined thickness forming part of a backlight structure. The next layer is a diffuser panel 504 on the rear of the light guide plate 503.

A cold cathode tube 2e is disposed within the housing. The cold cathode tube is operable to shine light through a notch 505a into the multi-layer panel body. Light is thus provided to the light guide plate 503, thereby providing backlighting of the liquid crystal panel.

The cold cathode tube 2e also serves to shine light on the rotation reels 3L, 3C, 3R. However, it may be seen from Figs. 35 and 37 that the cold cathode tube 2e does not provide backlighting for the symbols on the rotation reels 3L, 3C and 3R.

In Okada, the liquid crystal panel 501 and diffuser panel 504 are layers of a multi-layer structure. Accordingly, there is no teaching in Okada of a light-diffusing element arranged on an opposed side of a chamber in spaced relationship relative to a panel carrying gaming machine artwork, wherein a gaming machine illuminating arrangement arranged in the chamber between the panel and the light diffusing element is operable to provide backlighting for the panel.

Thus, neither Kaminkow nor Okada, whether considered separately or in a hypothetical combination, teaches all the elements of claim 1 of the present application.

The applicant also notes that no particular reasons have been given as to why one skilled in the art would modify the arrangement of Kaminkow using the apparatus of Okada. The office action refers to column 5 lines 55-66 of Kaminkow. However, the cited passage is merely a general statement that modifications and variations may be made to the described arrangement. There is no particular teaching or suggestion of or

motivation for any specific variations or the desirability of any variation. It is submitted that this boilerplate statement does not provide any reason as to why a skilled person would seek to combine Kaminkow and Okada.

The applicant also notes that claim 1 of the present application specifies that a plurality of semiconductor illuminating arrangements are arranged in a predetermined array on a carrier. It is submitted that the light bulbs 98 shown in Fig. 3 of Kaminkow are not arranged in an array. Instead, the light bulbs are arranged around the periphery of a mechanical blower mechanism 66.

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is submitted that claim 1 and its dependent claims are patentable over Kaminkow in light of Okada.

Claims 2-6 and 8-11 are dependent on claim 1 and are believed patentable over Kaminkow and Okada for at least the reasons given above with respect to claim 1. However, the applicant offers the following additional comments regarding the dependent claims.

The office action asserts on page 3 paragraph 8 that Kaminkow teaches that the illuminating arrangement is a sequence of repeating groups. The applicant has carefully reviewed the cited portions of Kaminkow, but can detect no teaching or suggestion of illuminating elements being arranged in “repeating groups.”

With regard to claims 5 and 6, the office action asserts that Kaminkow teaches that “the group comprises a predetermined number of differently coloured LEDs in which the colors may correspond to various colors”. It is respectfully submitted that since Kaminkow does not teach the illuminating elements being arranged in a sequence of repeating groups, there is no teaching at all in Kaminkow of the groups each comprising a

predetermined number of differently coloured LEDs. The applicant thus traverses the office action's assertions regarding claims 5 and 6 of the present application.

Although new claims 12 and 13 have not been rejected by the Examiner, the applicant respectfully submits that, while independent claims 1 and 12 are of different scope, the above-identified arguments may also apply to distinguish pending claims 12 and 13 from the cited art.

For at least these reasons, the Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-6 and 8-13 should be allowable over the cited art of record.

CONCLUSION

In general, the Office Action makes various statements regarding the pending claims and the cited references that are now moot in light of the above. Thus, the Applicants will not address such statements at the present time. However, the Applicants expressly reserve the right to challenge such statements in the future should the need arise (e.g., if such statement should become relevant by appearing in a rejection of any current or future claim).

The Applicant submits that the claims define allowable subject matter and are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or the Applicant can be of any assistance, the Examiner is invited and encouraged to contact the Applicant at the number below. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any necessary fees or credit any overpayment to the USPTO Deposit Account MHM, Account No. 13-0017.

Respectfully submitted,

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